F
129
.S2W5

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
1800

"Here feel we but the penalty of Adam,
The Seasons' difference."

The Woody Hill Meadow

By

Harriet Martin Williams

ILLUSTRATED

Salem, N. Y.
Privately Printed
1912

"Here feel we but the penalty of Adam,
The Seasons' difference."

The Woody Hill Meadow

By

Harriet Martin Williams

ILLUSTRATED

SALEM, N. Y.
Privately Printed
1912

F129
.S2W5

2572B4
Ap 10 43

4-28-43

Limited Edition
of one hundred and fifty copies

WOODY HILL, SALEM, NY

THE WOODY HILL MEADOW

"BEAUTIFUL for Situation" is the meadow we are considering; truly fascinating the tree-shadows surrounding the enclosure: with Woody Hill for a back-ground and White Creek running its entire length, the pasture is ideal. Pasture did we say? This place of beauty deserves a better name. More than twenty-five thousand dawns and twilights have crept over its surface in the present generation; think you these many days have left no record for this favored spot? Picnics—Corn Roasts—Clam-Bakes—Fairs—Festivals—Soldiers' Reunion—

10TH U.S. CAV. IN CAMP AT SALEM, N.Y. AUG. 30, 1912.

Harvest Homes—and United States Cavalry have found accommodation in this broad domain and cast their bright pictures on memory's wall.

Not always has the field presented this velvet-like appearance; progress and development of agricultural art have here been largely demonstrated. Looking back through the dim past, we see half a score of men armed with scythes and whetstones wending their way thither; one carries a huge pail which is deposited in a shaded corner; this contains ginger, molasses, vinegar, a piece of ice—and a dipper. Then follow days of arduous labor, mowing, tossing, raking, mounding, until the heavy-footed oxen come slowly in to

carry off the loads. To-day, the mowing machine and tedder turn grass into hay in a few hours, and before the on-looker can focus his vision for the the hay-field scene the last load hastens through the gate, leaving the meadow to recover from the shock of modern improvement.

The boundaries have changed with the passing years. The Western portion having been devoted to Church, Home and School purposes—strenuous life ensued; chapters of romance and tragedy might be written in relation to this life, but the facts are too sacred for the public gaze. The grounds were given the highest cultivation; drives were laid out and walks

gravelled, a fountain built and sundial established; roses planted and a tennis-court prepared; a rustic cross and arbor also embellished the lawn. One day a little girl from the Williams Homestead, pail and shovel in hand, went down the rosewalk to the creek seeking craw-fish; digging into the bank with her small shovel, she unexpectedly opened St. Paul's Church-yard spring, which has ever since been flowing a crystal stream.

The Eastern portion furnished a site for the farm-house, removal of which from the head of the Street was necessitated by the erection of the Court-House. Of the former we will only say that the view from the

windows must, for all kinds of work, form a daily inspiration.

The mill-race, at the foot of the hill, has now become a relic of the past. It conveyed water from the dam to the old grist-mill; and was constructed with much labor and expense; always giving trouble by leaking and land-sliding. Its race is run, however, for a dynamo supplies its place in the new Manhattan Mill. Nature now is busy filling the empty space with moss and ferns and flowers.

The meadow is like an open book, each season recording a sweet story of of love and care. The Spring sunshine arouses the pussy-willows, calls up the grass blades and charms the tree-buds

into leaves; the robin and the blue-bird add their joy and our hearts respond to the harmony.

Surprise awaits the Spring rambler, as he wanders through the clover toward the bushes on the bank; the glimmer of water meets his eye—a few steps forward, and the swiftly flowing White Creek is disclosed. What more pleasing picture for the fisherman?—a trout stream fed by mountain springs. He stands entranced before the panorama, and in absence of rod and line, reclines upon the fern-bank, giving himself up to enjoyment. Just below him swims the speckled beauty, with airy fins waving above the pebbled bed. A turtle

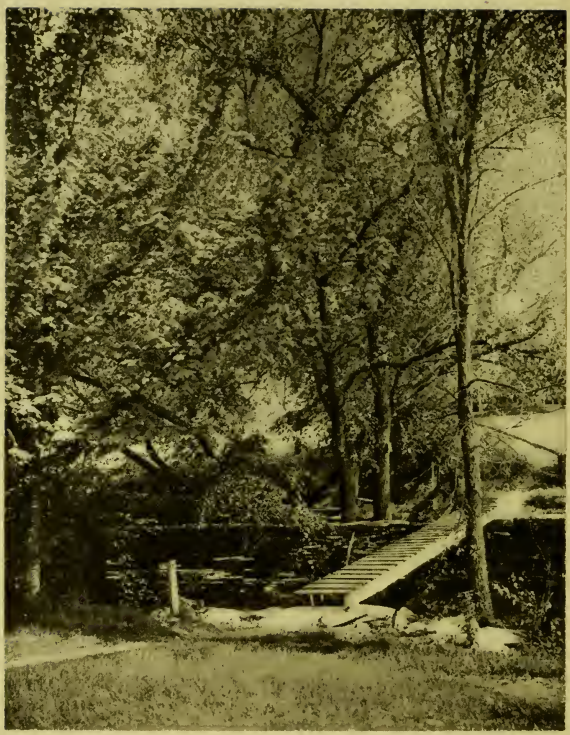
sunning himself on a moss-covered stone, looks askance at the intruder, while the squirrel on the opposite shore regards him with suspicion. The meadow lark, too, hovers anxiously over her nest, but what cares he? The gentle ripple soothes his spirit and calms his restless nerves. Gladly would he tarry where the song-sparrow trills on the swinging bough and the sunbeams dance beneath. The laughing brook may indeed "go on forever," but he must depart.

The days are like book-pages, each increasing in beauty and interest, until the daisies announce that Summer is here. Oh! the charm of a July daisy-

field! Stand amid the starry heads and look down upon the wonders here revealed. See the wild orchid growing beside the graceful fern, the tiny vine meandering among the many tinted grasses; here and there a lily, bowing its head as if in devotion, with a bobolink warbling the praise. Wonder not that the cricket chirps so contentedly and the butterfly flits so rapturously; even the soul is uplifted in this maze of beauty. Fain would we linger in the sun-lit realm, peering at the invisible, yet far too peaceful is the plot for careless human tread.

A leaf turns—and the woodbine's banner hangs on the hillside, heralding the approach of Autumn. Many

regard this season with dread and dismay, in anticipation of increasing cold—overlooking the glory and richness of October. Passing strange it is that such enjoyment should be so needlessly forfeited. Gaze at the meadow-brook landscape lying in the sunlight this quiet September day. Vividly green the pasture, intensely deep the shadows that mark the border of the silvery stream. So clear is the atmosphere, that it seems but a step to the familiar nooks of Woody Hill. An indescribable spell rests upon the scene; and the mind reads the message of Life and Love—Life everlasting—and Love worshiping the Author of such enchanting beauty.



The Woody Hill Meadow

The falling leaves speak of a coming change: and soon the whirling snowflakes will hint at the crackle and sparkle of winter. With thoughts of Christmas at its opening and dreams of Easter at its close—why should winter be a gloomy period? True, the meadow lies under a blanket of white, but its chapter treats of purity, rest and tranquillity. The eye delights in the glistening snow, the ice-glazed hillside and the sparkling etchings against the azure sky—a sense of peace steals through the heart before this restful picture.

The mysterious crows now and then break the silence of the air by cawing of something—we know not what.

The thawing, raining and freezing of February often transform the field into a skating-park, and the smiling moon looks down upon the bright eyes and rosy cheeks of those enjoying an evening's revel. The splendor of a wintry sunset is enhanced by the reflection on hill and field. We can not forget the ecstacy of a city guest while viewing this display: his visits hitherto had been in the Summer. He carried the vision over the sea and longed for another glimpse.

Oftentimes, familiarity with beautiful places produces indifference to their charms; not so is it with this: associations gather in the rolling years and the widening changes bring greater fondness and regard.

SALEM, N.Y.

But why so much concerning this "little corner?" Have we no interest in the broader land? "Surely living in a small place need narrow no one. The smallest place on earth is in touch with the world; lines go out from it to the ends of the earth." Such is the case here; the highway passing the meadow, formed, a few years since, the starting point of the owner and his wife as they went forth to encircle the globe. Seven months later, they were greeted by a welcoming multitude in front of that same meadow gate.

There are some in Europe, Asia, Africa and the remotest limits of our own country, who joyfully hail a

message from Salem, their memories bearing the impress of her woods and streams.

It has frequently been observed that those who have once lived in, or visited the "Valley of Peace," always desire to return: a magnetic influence pervades the meadow locality; time and again the passing stranger has been seen to pause, cross the street and with folded arms stand in dreamy contemplation. Happy indeed are they whose "lines have fallen" in this pleasant place and to whom the beauty of nature has been a continual benediction.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 014 224 377 5